

SONGS OF THE STARS

RIEMAN BAXLEY

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Songs of the Stars

By

Isaac Rieman Baxley

Author of

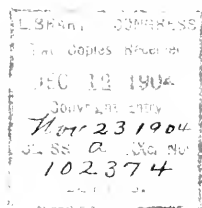
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DEDICATION

To whom?

To those who dwell among the Stars, and
gaze

Steadfast at us, as into summer nights,
We bring our lamp of glory, and always
Stand there quiescent in the summer's
lights—

To them.

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SONGS OF THE STARS

THE STAR

Because my seas are wide, and I
Whirl through a Planet-painted sky,
Because I dare to come and go
Through endlessness, and overflow
Of passion's still unfigured glow;
Because the eyes of men shall be
But where I take them carefully,
The fate of men be fixed, and cast
Wherever path of mine is passed,
All-helpless tenants of my day
Fade as my figure shrinks away;
Because I dance, and swim, and be
What all men cling to passionately—
Upbraiding in their jealousy;
Because I bind them in my keep,
And hear them wail, and see them weep,
And still with heartless vigor run
My race immortal with the Sun,
What challenger shall rise and say
The Earth is fretful on her way?

I laugh when comes the little cry
Of trouble-mad mortality:
What! shall I bear thee, and invest
My body for thy joy and zest;
My beauty braid, and lips declare
For thee the lullabies of air;
My potions mix, for thee distil
Elixirs the starred spaces fill;
Shall I with tireless footsteps turn
Round the vast plains where planets burn,
Draw past the brilliant gazing globes
Of intense Suns my clouds and robes;
Sustain thee when the unknown gales
Drive into Heavenly climes and vales—
Shall I do this, and then dare be
Rebellious to my Sovereignty?

Go then; forsake my wayward will;
If thou'rt a conqueror, go—fulfil
In some far Planet's starry eyes
The madness of thy destinies.

THE EARTH-SONG

Led out on the ripples of laughter and light
I am Bride of the Heavens, and my Lord
is the Sun;

O tell me not other ones shine in his sight,
I know that his passion possesses but one.
I know that he burns, that his eyes are con-
sumed

With a longing for me, that the tale of
his days
Is warmed with the breath of his lips, that
perfumed
Flies out to my bosom, is gathered and
stays.

I know that his passion, through plentiful
years,
Did beset me, I know that the storm of his
heart
Was hot in the flames of his failures and fears
To break through the distance, and draw
me apart.

O Lord of my longing, at last in my eyes
Is the purple of passion; O Star of the Day

Forever I blush when the wind of surprise
Drives the curtain of darkness that cloaks
thee away.

Forever the lilies and roses arise
Where the touch of thy tenderness pressed
me and passed,
Forever the face of the Earth justifies
The caress of caresses on her heart was the
last.

No Planet I fear, for I braid in my hair
Their delicate lusters, and gleam in the
gems
Of an infinite Heaven as one who walked
there
With garments that gathered the Stars to
their hems.

And the Lord of my conquest is leading
me on,
Through the depths of the midnight and
azure of day,
Far out where the footsteps of other Stars
run,
And the flash of their circlings breaks out
into play.

Where the Sisters of Heaven revolve in their
twains,
And the dials of Heaven point over the true
Unchangeable grace where the Planets in
plains
Superbly shine out for their consorts to
view.

There I go, and never my Sovereign denies,
Inconstant, his presence, as planting his
feet
Serenely on paths of his far-reaching eyes,
He watches the globes where they glitter
and meet.

The gales of the ether blow out of their home,
Delightful we float into space and away,
O Lord of my loving, where thou callest I
come,
What bond hath the Earth could encom-
pass her stay!

THE COUNTRY OF THE STAR

And still my dwellers find me sweet,
Still follow where my fearless feet
Find footfall into vacant ways
That my bright presence first betrays.
Through the new fields of days to be
I float in azure subtlety,
And, with the instincts of a maid,
Through Heaven I find the placid shade,
Hiding a face delight makes fair,
And plunge to cool its gladness there.
The words of many a distant sphere
Drift into time, and catch my ear,
And many a Sister signals me
With gesture of exposed beauty
Across the light of many a Sea.
The maids of Heaven have many a phase
Of radiance in their sparkling ways,
And many a Song of subtle shade
Is in the Heavenly meadows played.
In globes of various splendor runs
Th' unequal ardor of the Suns;
Resplendent in the morning air
Flings o'er the Stars its brilliant glare
The face of him who wakes to dare.

I on that glittering ancestry
Gaze as a Goddess equally;
No matter what delightful air
Fanned from the glades of anywhere,—
Blown from its lair of loveliness,
Witching the keep of lost duress,—
Flows in mysterious breezes where
Some figure trails her wondrous hair;
No matter how the Stars entwine
Tiaras where their signets shine,
And circle other names than mine,
Nor if the Lord of some lost way
Should blaze with sudden ecstasy,
And dash the ardor of his eyes
Where some slow watcher waiting flies;
Nor matter if a thousand dyes
Mix where the light impassioned lies
Upon some Planet splendidly—
Still is this Heaven a home for me!
O what resistless sense to be
Swung like a signal out at sea,
No dread of wave, nor gloom, nor gale,
Nor know no tumult to assail
Angelic wings that safely cleave
Whatever winds they find and leave.
Whatever course of marvelous Sun

Down the swift glades of Time be run,
Whatever answering image lies
When conquest turns his burning eyes,
What shape, what fragment, what decree
Breaks from that cloud Eternity,
All is of them, and all of me.
I am no Star to wander on
Undone, dissevered, and alone;
Far on the fringe of all I see
Arranged in startling panoply,
Far in the realms where grandeur earns
Wages of excellence, and burns
Perfervid in the glowing urns;—
For where the depths of many dyes
Flash into their intricacies,
And far wherever newness be
Is still the flame that floats with me.
My heart is as a beacon lit,
And I, impassioned, look from it;
I love the Heavens and starry eyes
That fathom many mysteries;
I love the Seas, where changing swim
Shadows of floating seraphim,
The keen, delicious words they sing
Thrill through myself and everything.
Remember that we Worlds of bliss

Have most exquisite consciousness;
Children of pain keep many sighs
Surrounding where their trouble lies;
Mortals that hovering come and go
Over my heart in ceaseless flow—
Forever with low-looking eyes—
Keep not our splendid sympathies.
But I, I yearn for every Star
In all the Worlds that were and are.
Where are the dazzling Worlds that swim
With beauty bubbling to the brim?
Where the translucent Globes that fly
Through airs that are a rhapsody,
And clouds that can not sink and die?
Where are the Seas that flash and foam
On confines of resplendent home
And, vanquished, beautiful become?
Where are the Suns suddenly rise
Bent on perfect subtleties
And heat of every new emprise?
Wherever they, my heart aware
Of all that makes their purpose fair
Throbs with forever gazing there!

Like a sweet Island, swung astream,
I float in Heaven, where pass and gleam

Currents and cargoes constantly,
Swept in the winds of melody.
When in the lull of things I rest,
Curtained and couched, a favored guest,
And midnight-stars light up the dream
That lies in shadow out between
Th' exquisite things that are, and seem,
O then the passion and delight
Of a pure Planet in the sight
Of Stars whose very number makes
A melody, and Time that takes
Mysterious look of Infinite—
O then the fate of Earth is fair,
And cool the clouds that keep her there!

FAREWELL OF THE EARTH
TO HER SONS

Toll slow—toll slow—
O let the chimes go
Far out from my heart with solemn flow,
For the days of the Star
Do vanish, and are
Where slumber and silence their darkness
bestow.
For the bells of the Heavens are hanging in
spheres
That toll to the temper of sorrow and tears,
For the Stars of the Heavens are misty with
pain
That the light of the Earth lies low in the
wane,
And the Watchers of Heaven, who heard as
they passed
Call her name where forever they found her
at last.
On they fly through the infinite shadows in
vain,
For the face of the Earth is forgotten again—
And the Legend of Earth sleeps sound with
the slain.

Toll low—toll low—
O let the light go
With lingering looks on my face and slow,
For the colors that fade
From my visage were made
Where the beautiful things of the past over-
flow.

O the days that the Earth in her gladness
sped by
Where the pathways of Heaven are fast in
the sky,
And the nights when the Earth went aslumber-
ing soon
Because of the fancies that fell from the
Moon,
And the dusk of her changing, the dusk and
delay
When the Songs of the Sunset swept out with
the day,
And the voices of evening in tremor became
The heralds to tell all the Stars of her name,
O the conquest of Earth, O what charm had
decay
To steal all the strength of her pleasures
away.

But swing the chimes low,
And let the words go
With the slant of the bells that are heavy
and slow,
For the bursts of my sighs
Where these sorrows arise
Shake the symbols of sadness that tremble
to know.

There were voices of many that girdled in
pride
All the zones of the earth; lo the Singers all
died;
Lo the quest of the happy, and the things of
the gay
Dropped out into darkness and echoed away;
They have gone; whither went all the change-
able throng
That once claimed the Earth with their con-
quest and song,
Did they take not the secret to me did belong?

Did they lean on my bosom, luxurious guest,
And steal out the perfume exhaled from my
breast?
Did they breathe out their love with a tumult
of sighs

That fell with the darkness of rain from my
eyes?

While I slept did they dally, and vanquish the
morn,

Have they fled with my favor, and laugh they
in scorn—

Is the Earth all alone—do the Stars never
mourn?

Ring low—ring low—

O let the tones go

Out into the ether with musical flow,

For I perish, but still

Chance melody will

Break over the Heavens to let the Stars know.

THE POETS PRAISING EARTH

My Poets people Isles of Sea,
And walk the shores, and sing to me;
They watch the waters, where the haze
Falls out from Heaven, and floating stays,
And, with ecstatic fears that he
Should be the Singer loved of me,
Each strikes the chords he keenest plays.
They chant, and I, begemmed with Song,
Bear the blue Islands lightly on,
I smooth the Sea, and bring its end
Gently to them, whose songs extend,
And space floats on, and, like a flower
Dew-hung with passion's passing hour,
I quiver with suppressed delight,
Stirred by the winds that choose the Night,
And, Music making time in me,
I brush the dewdrops in the Sea,
Too happy rise, calling the Day,
And Songs and Singers drift away!

THE SINGER

So, from my caverns in the air
I watched him when he stopped and sang;
I grasped the clouds and held them there,
And stole the music while it rang.

If some wild Star a tremor made
I stirred the clouds and hid the spark,
While the swift music stronger played
I shut the Heavens, and kept them dark.

What need have I of Singer sweet,
My ears are dead to pipes and song,
My wish is where the distant meet,
And vast the shades where I belong.

Do I stretch on the clouds and dream,
Tossed in the tumult of the air,
To hear the sound of some small theme
Strike on the apparitions there?

I turned the shadow of my eyes
And made the atmosphere a gloom,
I spread my robes on broken skies,
And swept them to their midnight home.

I lashed the feeble Moon away
And scorned her crescent flickering,
I choked the Wind-words with dismay
And asked my Singer then to sing.

And when his lips, with sorrow bent,
Dropped somber singing, plaintively,
From out the rhythm as it went,
I, following, snatched the melody.

I stole the beauty, and the pain
Rang in its shapeless manner on;
I drew the dye and left the stain
To stamp the making of his Song.

Then stood he still: his singing sank
To senseless words, said heavily,
Still with the thirst of rage I drank
The last drop of its harmony.

And still I tossed the music back
Behind me, to some summer Isles,
But him I harassed in the black
Shadows I laid in long defiles.

O it was joy to see him stand;
I have a thousand men to lead,

I stormed the Heavens from land to land
For him, and whirled the winds with speed.

With wraiths of wrath I filled the dome
Of all my vault, Immensity,
I shut the lights about my home,
And smote the Singer angrily.

I drove the Winds that wait for me
Round their fierce course to gather in
Old echoes I had kept to be
Sounds of the Songs he did begin.

With scorn I scattered them below,
They fell incessant, like the rain
Of some fresh weeping, and did grow,
Watered by them, the sights of pain.

I left him; for myself repose
Drew from the Stars he could not see:
I slept in Heaven, and when arose
The Sun, misled him craftily.

I drew the glittering Orb away
And rolled him down on pleasant plain,
Content was at the bridle way,
And beauty drove the treacherous twain.

I gave the Sun delight and ease,
And he, the wily Monarch, smiled
And slacked the pace, and took the peace,
And looked not for his lands exiled.

But I to savage brooding turned,
And laid my hands on heavy knees
Till the low clouds with rancor churned
Distempered through the dripping trees.

There is a terror of the air,
A darkness of the very Orb,
There is a time when touch is where
It feels a frightened silence throb.

And he was there: I poured the dye
Of terrible temper on the world,
And tore the vestiges of sky
From the scared patches where they
whirled.

And sat me down, nearly content;
These were the things I chose to give;
Hark! little sound that shivering went
Away, wast thou the last to leave?

SONG OF THE POET

Was ever my Soul on the swell of the ether?
And did it descend in the circle of Mars?
O why on my lips are the Songs of a believer,
And why through my brain is the dance
of the Stars?

Was it I, of a sudden, from somewhere descended,
Who fell, as a Planet unceasingly swings,
And flies with her magical motion extended,
And clings with her feet to the quivering
strings?

Ah! never! the music was played or was
spoken;
Went into the drift of the ether, and there
Lies out on the edges of Heaven all broken,
And lies on my lips but the earth—and despair!

But the magnets of Heaven, ever busy in
winding
All the jewels of Heaven in glitter and
play,

Are they still? O why will they never be
finding
The flash of the Earth-Star and bear it
away?

Away and away with the wings of the mid-
night,
That carry the Stars when their musical
rounds
Flash into the keys, and pull them in delight
Out over the ether in exquisite sounds.

For the world is fast, and it swings and swings
And seeks for the sensitive, quivering
strings—
And almost stops till the melody rings.

Be still! I am a Poet mad;
With tongue of torment, and a name
Struck from the World it should have had,
And doubt, and wretchedness, and flame
Of hatred for the things that give
Delight to people where I live.
With heart of Song, and lips that bleed
Because they tear the terrible weed
Of rottenness, and bitter, sad
Are all the sounds I ever had.

Why can I never stop and tear
The thing within that's always there
And hurl it out into the air?
If with a savage World I stood
Once in a savage solitude;
Once never heard within my heart
Mysterious music plays its part;
Knew that I was a crime within,
And heard my lips their tales begin;
O if I could look out and see
The World in storm, and then in me
Heard the same sound of misery—
If once the lyre snapped in my heart,
O could my lips then learn their part?
I hate to be something within
That is as gentle as a Star
Dipped where the sea and air begin,
That will not move from where they are,
That keeps by Heaven and keeps by land—
And is what Angels understand—
And then with level lips that close
Determined over all that flows
From some imagined World to me,
Stand in a vexed World sullenly—
And vex it still with obstinacy.

I am a Poet mad, with tongue
That knows the speech of Heaven, and smote
Last night in Heaven, as Angels sung
The secrets of my lips, and wrote
Words on the echoes of their air,
And was, O bliss, a Poet there!

It was the sounds of slumbering,
This is the World, I can not sing:
There's nothing overhead, the Sky
Gleams with a rancorous subtlety;
There's not a Star dares gird its dance,
No Planet springs her bold entrance,
Shame on their faces! they refuse!
Could Beauty ever give excuse?
Ah! Wind and Cloud, I know where none,
Not even you, will dare to come,
A gulf that lies stretched openly—
Refusing nothing—O the Sea!
My heart sinks with its sounds in thee!

But the World floats on, and swings and
 swings,
And waits for the silver sound of the strings—
And my Heart holds tight, and to it clings.

* * * * * * * *

I wept, and the soft rain of tears
Washed through the darkness at my feet,
And he, the passionate Singer, hears
My heart-throbs in their hurried beat.

Slowly the burdened clouds I break
In pieces, and, with pallid face,
One after one of the Stars I take
And burnish in its glittering place.

THE DREAM

It may be that the things that live
By some exceeding subtle Star
Swept to the Planet where I stayed,
And drew me, with words they made
Over a new unfinished bar,
Out to their homes, where Music hung
In air—and down the Stars distinctly rung.

Or was it that a Spirit dyed
The mists of morn, and overlaid
The edge of Earth, and rolled the tide
For once as other Worlds were made?
And broke the sequence of the Sea,

And jarred the air with mystic time,
And while it scattering came, he played
The Songs of Stars and gave them me ?

Stars where the cloud-heaps float in foam
Of some peculiar light that will
But scintillate, and keep its own
Expression and its movement still;
Where clouds love music, and exist
Stretched sensitive upon the air,
And things no Song of ours would dare
From out the lips of Singers flow,
And float in Heaven, and from them go—
O tell me, was it into these
Extremely furnished harmonies

I strayed,
And listened while the music played—
Or even did I hear it here
Sound in the Earth's real atmosphere?

I know that Singers stretch their strings
In dews of morn, and from the night
Splash out their liquid murmurings,
And dip their fingers in delight
Through the cool things of Earth, and fling,
There in the coming of the Day,
What words he loves and bears away.

I know that ears are ever tuned
To catch the sonnets of the Sun,
And lips are begging nights that mooned
Full-figured, waver in replies
Fantastic things to following eyes—
And he who sings exactly these
Is Poet—with his mysteries.

What care I though the Gates of Day,
Swift moving with their golden bars
Thrown wide on roads that bear way
The Night, and Moon and thousand Stars—
And there reflecting in the Sun
Stand opening wide to every one—
Should never pass me, and I lay
Shut in by night, and dawn, and day.
What care I if the Sentinel
Should never know me, as, aflame
With touches of the hastening Stars,
And flying skirt of desperate Moon,
He draws too close the Day and soon;
Nor care I though his glorious eyes,
Forever glittering in pursuit
Of him who trails the dew-damp foot,
Should sweep me with their vivid stare,
And find me strange, and leave me there.

If I must harken as they go,
The things that make me love them so,
And watch them, when their fluttering hands
Make signet of the signs they know
To pass him where he nodding stands,
The strange old Ward of Earth and Lands;—
If I must catch the words of tune
The Stars sing in the ring of Moon,
To charm him as they drift away
The thousandth time in face of Day,
And with no trace themselves, betray;—
The thousandth time if I must say
Whatever words they're answering,
Words of the kind he seems to know,
To please him ere he let me go—
Forgive him that did keep me so—
And smite the lips he says shall flow,—
Then through the shadows of the deep
Sweep on, ye Stars, and let me keep
Unhappy watch through Gates of Day
While ye, ye Wanderers, steal away.

Sometime some Maid of Heavenly race,
Too eager for the purple deep,
With laugh of parting, and a pace
That speeds with print of fluttering feet

The edge of Morn, shall delicate
Entangle with the speech she gives
A word of Heaven, and I by fate
Shall catch the country where she lives.
And then, because I find out where

A path is in the Clouds, and when
Delight is summering through the air
With Stars that hide themselves, and then,
Far from the fretful eyes of Day,
Disrobe and in the darkness play,—
Ah! then, perhaps if I should be
Chanced with th' impulsive company
That press the gates and throng the ways
Again where the old Warder stays,
And looks and wonders while the Sun
Keeps panting with the path he's on,
Ah! then, perchance because my lips
Have really breathed the midnight sky,
And touched the faintest cloud that tips
The fluttering Moon as she goes by,
It might be that delight would make
My memory willing, and I say
The common words he loves to take
When out he swings the Gates of Day.

Keep on, ye Singers, who divide
The quarters of the Earth, and string
Content your chords, and play beside
The ways the World is wandering,
Shall I be with you, or away
Risk in the shapes of Sky and Cloud
The strangeness of my Songs, and stay
Far from the courts where listeners crowd
In circles where the Poets play?
None answer: and I can not hear,
When with a desperate, struggling wing
I fan my Songs, and they appear
Lost in the mighty murmuring
That clouds the roads from Star to Star—
Can only see them fade, and far
Toss through the depths where terrors are.

It is my secret, and—afraid
To settle when your wings of peace
Rest where the Earth has shores of ease,
And where the Pipes of Songs have played
So long the very Seas are said
To sing the sands into a tune—
I shall, with shadow of the Moon,
And swift-winged Stars in fiery bands,

Vanish from where he always stands—
That strange old Ward of Earth and Lands—
Clamoring for words he understands.

THE DREAMERS

My love, why should we test the Earth?
Why Folly bind us, and we cling
Atempering on the edge of Mirth?
Thou are not kind in answering.

Why not? The Stars are very near,
And we so lightly stationed wait,
Come, shall we venture? Is it fear,
Or loving, keeps thee hesitate?

It is not I exacts delay,
And thou, 'tis marvelous to me
Feeling thy form in the Earth-winds sway,
For the dead Earth is strange to thee.

There are no airs around us near,
Hist thee, my Love, lo everything
Falls from the Stars, and faintly here
Drops from the Stars their questioning.

Lo, all the gentle things have gone,
The flutes have flown, ah! why not we?
The Poets sang, and, one by one,
Paced from the groves of Arcady.

Look in their dead aisles through the breeze,
There's echo only, and decay
Stirs all the stoppage of the trees
To blot the feet that went away.

See! 'tis the treachery of the Sun
To steal his touches on the eyes
Of stark dead marbles, and to run
His fingers through infirmities.

Ah! when he's finished with the face
Of Beauty, see how cold she lies,
Her wet cheek moulded into place,
That Earth should show her agonies.

And still thou'rt constant? Here I chide
And all th' unhappy signets show,
And yon the Stars arise and glide
In safety, and in pleasure glow.

Yon are the Stars, and they go thronging,
And we are here, with feet astill,

And watch them pass, and they go longing,
And their old paths they upward fill.

'Tis I—my fault—myself alone—
So little, and dispassionate;
My Song is only undertone,
Thou wantest—I, unable, wait.

Can I not change thee? Never yield
Thee music that will move thy feet?
And never take thee where the field
Of midnight will the music meet?

Come Love: the winds of ancient nights
Strike on the Earth, and rise, and flow
Mixed with still ancients' delights
That struggle from their memory slow.

Like an intense, mysterious air
That startles, and becalms again,
The households of the Planets there
Open their doors, and close, and then—

We look and listen in the dark,
And they, invisibly within,
Stand in their homes, and but the spark
Of answer glows where they had been.

And so they cherish, and deceive,
And do forget when we would know;
And yet, O Love, before they leave,
This is the air with them will go.

They spread their hands, and move and stay,
Finding the steps that thread the clouds;
They stop, and vanish, and delay,
And stand intent in splendid crowds.

See how their burdened figures climb,
Slowly with waiting, overhead,
And then, like words that catch the rhyme,
Rush out, in faster music led.

We can not keep them: still they come,
Refreshed from some unknown descent,
And pale with longing far from home,
And dazzled when they homewards went.

There is the movement of their gait,
See, shall we hasten and entwine
Our garments round the Winds that wait
Impatient where the Stars decline?

Lo, every ripple of the Sea
Runs o'er the brink, and goes away,

Slips from its sleepless bed, and we,
Also awake, gaze on, and stay.

Look! Every name of Passion's there,
And every glory that the Sun
Saw done in any summer air
Died out the road the Stars are on!

And we remain: and still the Day
Unseals his record from the Night,
And scatters, like an heir, away
His testament the Stars did write:—

And all the riches hoarded by
Dishonored fade, and he, the Sun,
Reels up a flaring edge of sky
And we—O Love, we've gone! we've gone!

THE DREAM SONG

At last, at last,
With wing in the wind,
And wind in the depths of Heaven,
And face in the flash of the Stars as they
passed,
And eyes where the Stars are Seven;
At last where the Moon, with its silver sphere,
Swings swift round the Earth, and flies so near
I laugh lest the men in the World should see
The cold white Globe come threateningly.

At last on the edge of the purple dark
The whirl of my wings is free,
And I chase at my will a great white spark
That always appeared to me
Like a flame cast into the Sky, and kept
By something invisibly:
Fast, fast through the lights, and the shadows
and rain
Of the Star-drops that disappear out in the
plain
I vanish, and faster forever I gain.

My love and myself at last in the Sky
And its passionate sights of intensity;
For I pant and I palpitate thinking of when
 I stood on the Earth and looked up at the
 Sky,
And sighed for the beautiful Stars, that were
 then
 Dissevered and far in their mystery:
O the trouble, and passion, and tears of the
 Day
That spotted the Earth, in its dust of decay,
That fiercely drank down of my sorrows
 always:
But I live by the Stars, and they flame and
 they fade
Wherever my quest of desire is made,
And never, since them, am I lost or afraid.
But the Love of the Stars! O the atmosphere
 They kept from the Earth, and concealed
 in the Sky!
When I loved on the Earth, my love was dear,
 And the kiss of the Earth was an alchemy:
But the Stars, O the luminous Stars are where
Love's never afraid, for his vesture there
Will the lips never weave what the heart will
 not wear.

DANCING STARS

I know not where, I know not where
The Earth is round, and still
The Stars will love the midnight air,
And sparkling dance their fill;
I know not where they glide away,
Nor how they pass the Sea,
And come again when tired Day
Asks for their melody.

I know not how their sweet embrace
Is constant, and how true
Each sees at morn the lovely face
At eve each lover knew;
I know not how they whirl and float
So surely through the Sky,
And never lose a moment's note
In all the minstrelsy.

I can not tell, and know not whose
Eyes are enchanted there,
Nor how the magic maidens choose
Their steps into the air;
I only know that weary lies

The daring of the Sun,
Who murmurs while the wave replies—
And still the Stars dance on!

SONG OF THE ISLANDS IN THE SEA

Shine on, you Stars, but know that we
Are still the Islands in the Sea;
We know you while you rise and bound
From the dead underworld, and round
Swift Heaven whirl on impatiently,
Searching the Seas and shores where we
Appearing keep serenity.
We are the Islands of the Sea
To sing you still forever home
When you revisit us, and come
From out the dreadful underdome
With shadows on your slumbering eyes,
And open them into our skies.
Here we await on conquered Seas,
Stretched under clouds that float like these,
And here in quiet caverns shine
Our faces, and those eyes of thine.

Deep where the land lies under Sea
The eyes of love pierce ardently:
Who were the lovers would not meet
In thoughts that tangle up the feet?
And whose the lip tastes not the rose
On lips, that from the bosom grows?

We are the Islands of the Sea,
And sound the World with melody:
Why is it that there always stand
Listening ashore along the land
Poets, who strive to catch the glee
That breaks adrift from Isles of Sea.
We are the Queens of Song, who keep
Courts on the circuits of the deep,
And if our Songs should ever be
Sung harsh, we send them over Sea,
There, rippling scattered o'er the wave,
They sweeter come than when we gave.

The old, deep Sea draws down the weight
Of sadness, and on palpitate
The rhythms of our unknown air
To land, and find the listeners there.

As the swift Stars within the tide
Of Heaven astream, we Islands glide

Voluptuous leagues of rounded Seas
Caressed when Love can keenest please:
When Dawn is young, and shyly breaks
We lie await till rose-lip takes,
And when adark the water steals
The Sea-Isle thrills and conquest feels:
O wind and blossom, Sun and smile,
You reach us first on far-hung Isle,
And still whatever Music strays
Away, the sweetest ever stays.

Why is it that the palms decline
Softer a-sea than shore, are thine?
Why is it that the fervid deep
Refused our blossoming selves to keep,
And, burst on struggles of the tide,
We rose to Heaven, and lightly ride?
Kept on the compass of the Sea
We never know monotony,
For cloud and Sun, and hungered breeze
Blow ever through our floating trees,
And ever, thirsting deep the taste
Of flowers, for us the Sea-winds haste.

We are the Islands of the Sun,
The sweetest ever dreamed upon;

For Seas can dream, and lying there
With all the midnight on the air,
With all the Stars so very still,
And all the clouds at rest, until
There's nothing that could hear a Song—
The waves in slumbering slip along.
We are the Isles where color stays,
And where the burnished stroke of days
Rings on the gilded globe of Sun
The echo of his numbers done:
We are the Isles where sonnets gleam
Down in the darkness of the stream,
And while the Stars enchanted sing
Sonnets flash up in answering.

O Islands in the Purple Sea

 Fear not to drift on any shore,
Nor ever fear exquisitely

 Thy Songs shall fade, and sound no more:
Where would the eager lips of Day

 Ope in the morn, and where would rhyme
Beat its delicious roundelay

 By any shores, if not on thine?

Where would the tired Stars alight

 From the vast plains they're flying through,
And, weary-winged, rest when the Night

Slips out beyond themselves and you?
Couch of the Moon, and dream of Star,
O Isles where all the World can rest,
And all that journey by you are
With secret of your parting blest.

Ye are but magnets in the air
Polished by glory of the Sun,
Swung o'er the Seas, ye islands fair,
To draw the eyes the Seas upon:
To tempt the heart of all the shore
Out into your uncertain tide,
And lead all love that went before
Still on, and gather more beside.

We are the Isles where Music lies
Almost unstrung, so very low
Languish impulsive harmonies
Into the faintest sounds they know:
Where something keeps the strings apart,
And all the passion playing there
Is timid, that the very heart
Of Love lies beating on the air!

We are the Isles—not very far—
Look on our bosoms bared for thee,
Come, see our willing footsteps are

Imprinted pleading in the Sea;
We watch the clouds that keep the shore,
And sing the little sails afloat,
And believing draw the shallops o'er
Incessant, with our silvery note.

Shine on, ye Stars, but always know
Sea-Isles are waiting here below;
Ye ply the paths of Heaven, and we
Hold something shining in the Sea,
In Heaven whenever you shall pass
We keep your journey in the glass,
Leagues of the Sea you come and go,
And all your wanderings will we know.

With arms entwined from shore to shore
We glide, and singularly pour
Mysterious passion of our Song
On Souls that unto us belong;
We signal, piercing to the eyes,
And eagerly the helmsman plies
His circles that shall sweep him near,
And traffics swiftly over here.

Lost to the land, forever gone,
Never returned is anyone;
And if their eyes shall ever be

With Stars reflecting in the Sea—
And if their eyes shall ever gaze
In Heaven, where still the starlight plays—
And if their eyes should then forget,
And vanish unforgotten, yet
Still on their lips would lingering be
The Songs they heard in Isles of Sea.

We are the Isles of Sea, and twine
Our passion into words divine—
And still the Stars look on and shine.

VOX HUMANA

Chanting by the sunset,
Singing in the dawn,
Playing through the Heavens
While the sails blow on,
Dipping in the amethyst
Effusions of the sky
The temper of our instruments
As close the shades go by;
Striking from the gentled chords
Every bewildering note
That haunted all the happy sounds

That every Poet wrote,
Watching the clouds caught in the strings
Break into melody,
And scatter through the atmosphere,
And drop into the Sea;
Floating the music up and down
Where every ripple blows,
We are the Singers of the air,
And watch it where it goes.
We see it tangle in the Stars
And die into the night,
And hear the laughter of the Souls
Who passed it in delight,
We see them stop, as, one by one,
They turn, listening again,
And hear, bearing our strings away,
Their anxious sighs of pain:
We sow the secret of our Songs
Far out into the Sky,
And eagerly the blossoms blow
About the country high,
And we, inclined upon the Winds,
Chant in the scented air,
And all the World is still to catch
The hidden Singers there.

THE VANISHED SONG

Idly afloat on Seas of Rhyme,
With sails in slumber on the air,
And eyes that watch the careless time
Beating monotonously there,
Silent, alone on a lost Sea,
Far from the Sun, afar from Shore,
And far from Stars that dimly be
Still far from where the Stars are more.

Forever lulled, forever heard
The sounds that colors bring the Wave,
Forever waiting, never word
From me, for everything they gave,
Doomed into silence, undismayed
Indulgence from the helpless Seas
To fathom, and to see betrayed
Secrets to scatter when I please.
Shall I return, and Music bring?
Deceive the wandering Stars and steal
Back while their lips enchanted ring,
And in the Sun their Songs reveal?—
When I go back, if in my eyes
The Songs of Stars are hovering,
They fall unspoken, and there lies
Silence on me, although they sing.

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